Islam In Brief

الإسلام باختصار

A simplified Introduction to Islam

A collection of articles dealing with different Islamic issues

دليل للتعريف بالإسلام باللغة الإنجليزية

يرجى إهداءه إلى الناطقين بالإنجليزية.

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Islam at Your Fingertips

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PREFACE

This little book is a guiding book to Islam, where we are trying to vanish away the chaos that is hiding the reality of Islam. Therefore, we hope that you receive this book with open arms without a jot of prejudice to understand Islam as it is not as it has been depicted in the media. Then, let's pray God-Allah Almighty that this book would be a good introduction for the correct knowledge of Islam, the religion of all the messenger of Allah Almighty from Adam to Mohammad peace be upon them.

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Chapter One

The Creator

The name Allah (God) in Islam is the personal name of God. The most concise definition of God in Islam is given in four verses of Surah Al-Ikhlaas in the Holy Qur'an:

{{Say, "He is Allah, [Who is] One,

Allah, the Eternal Refuge,

He neither begets nor is born,

Nor is there to Him any equivalent."}}

(Holy Qur'an 112: 1-4)

To Muslims, this four-line definition of Almighty God serves as the touchstone of the study of God. Any candidate to divinity must be subjected to this ‘acid test' and since the attributes of The Creator given in this chapter are unique, false gods and pretenders to divinity can be easily dismissed using these verses.

i) The first criterion is «"Say, He is Allah, one and only"».

Can there be more than one god? This verse tells us that The Creator is the only one who has total and absolute power, unique in His names and attributes.

ii) The second criterion is, «'Allah is absolute and eternal'».

The word that is translated as "The Eternal, Absolute" from Arabic is something that can be attributed only to The Creator as all the other existent beings temporal or conditional? It also means that Allah is not dependant on any person or thing, but all persons and things are dependant on Him.

iii) The third criterion is «'He begets not, nor is He begotten'».

This means God was not born, nor does He give birth and share his divinity with others. Nor does He have a family or relationship with another being.

iv) The fourth test - which is the most stringent - is, «"There is none like unto Him"».

The moment you can imagine or compare 'God' to anything, then he (the candidate to divinity) is not God. It is not possible to conjure up a mental picture of

the One True God because of the simple fact, as creation, we only know creation.

The Muslims prefer calling the Supreme Creator, 'Allah', instead of the English word ‘God’. The Arabic word, ‘Allah’, is pure and unique, unlike the English word ‘God’, which can be played around with. For example, If you add ‘s’ to the word God, it becomes ‘Gods’, that is the plural of God. Allah is one and singular, there is no plural of Allah. If you add the word ‘father’ to ‘God’ it becomes ‘God-father’. God-father means someone who is a guardian. There is no word like ‘Allah-father’. If you add the word ‘mother’ to ‘God’, it becomes ‘God-mother’. There is nothing like ‘Allah-mother’ in Islam. Allah is a unique word, which does not conjure up any mental picture nor can it be played around with. Therefore, the Muslims prefer using the Arabic word ‘Allah’ for the Almighty.

Unity of God:

Some people pretend that the existence of more than one God is not illogical. Let us point out to them that if there were more than one God, they would dispute with one another for each god tries to fulfill his will against the will of the other gods. This can be seen in the mythology of the polytheistic and pantheistic religions.

If a 'God' is defeated or unable to defeat the others, he is surely not the one true God. It is also popular among polytheistic religions the idea of many Gods for each one is having different responsibilities. Each one would be responsible for a part of man's existence e.g. a Sun-God, a Rain-God, etc. This indicates that one 'God' is incompetent of certain acts, and moreover, he is also ignorant of the other Gods' powers, duties, functions and responsibilities. It cannot be an ignorant and incapable God. If there were more than one God, it would surely lead to confusion, disorder, chaos and destruction in the universe. But the universe is in complete harmony. The Glorious Qur'an says:

{{Had there been therein (in the heavens and the earth) gods besides Allâh, then verily both would

have been ruined. Glorified be Allâh, the Lord of the Throne, (High is He) above what they attribute to Him!}}. (Holy Qur'an 21: 22)

If there were more than one God, they would have taken away what they created. The Holy Qur'an says:

{{No son (or offspring or children) did Allâh beget, nor is there any *ilâh* (god) along with Him; (if there had been many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have tried to overcome others! Glorified be Allâh above all that they attribute to Him!}}, (Holy Qur'an 23:91).

Thus the existence of one True, Unique, Supreme, Almighty God, is the only logical concept of God.

What are the proofs that betoken Allah Almighty's existence?

Allah, to Whom be ascribed all perfection and majesty, has made demonstrations in this universe to enunciate His existence and His singleness.
He has made the signs in the universe as his elementary device to let the human being grasp by his/her brain. The reason can perceive the existence of Allah Almighty by the use of the rational evidence which is put in the world by the Creator.

These demonstrations are as follows:

1. The evidence of creation:

It is known that the human being does neither create him/herself nor does he/she the animals, the plants, and the earth he/she lives on.
The Holy Qur'an has stated this fact in the following verse:

> {{Or were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.}}, (Holy Qur'an 52: 35-36)

2. The evidence of charge:

The vestiges of Allah's attributes and the features of His magnificent creation are existing in every corner of the whole world. Everything is made in the universe is considered as a sign that betokens Allah Almighty Who has created, brought to perfection and excelled in making His creatures.

The unbeliever is the one who finds an elegant dress, and then he/she does not deduce that the existence of this dress gives evidence of the one who has made it. He imputes the existence of the dress to the "Coincidence" that has interfered to make the tip of the thread to get by itself into the threading hole of the

needle which moves in a counted movement to end up with the dress by all its minute wonderful details.

Is it possible that a rational person thinks that "the chance" or " the coincidence" is able to make a car that is found in front of his house?

Would he/she say that a wind has blown to gather the pieces of plastic upon the pieces of iron with a pinch of rubber and fragments of glass to make a car??!! ….Or would he/she wonder who has innovated this car by its capacities and accuracy?

Thus, a rational person would not accept that the universe, including its galaxies, planets, earth, seas, is simply created by an irrational nature which has neither an essence nor an existence.

Would a judicious person think that the human body, including its limbs whose structures and duties are accurate, is working as a thorough system depending on the creation of coincidence?

All the data of the modern science highlights of a capable and creative Creator of the world, and its containing.

{{Were they created of nothing, Or were they themselves the creators?}} (Holy Qur'an 52: 35).

3. The evidence of guidance:
When Pharaoh had asked the prophet Moses, peace be upon him, the answer was herewith:

{{Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "Who then, O Mûsa (Moses), is the Lord of you two?" [Mûsa (Moses)] said: "Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright."}},
(Holy Qur'an 20: 49-50).

In the simple explanation of Holy Qur'an: " Moses had answered: Our Lord is He Who has given everything He has created its fitting feature to be a sign of His perfect creation. Then, He guided each creature to what is made to accomplish on earth.

Henceforth, Allah Almighty has created each genre of the creatures to be guided to its kind of life-style and to its devices he/she/it provided with.

The birds are lead to migrate thousands of kilometres and then come back to their nests of which they have been already guided to build it.

The fish is also directed to migrate thousands of kilometres and to get back by the same way to its birthplace. For example, the Salmon, which migrates from some of the American rivers to the shores of Europe, is totally capable to come back to the river where it has been born. It simply swims on the

opposite direction of the river to put its eggs and to die therefore. The next generation is spontaneously able to do the same steps. To boot, Allah has guided the animals to the way of its nutrition and the manners of hunting. Some other creatures are acquainted with the stratagems of disguise and deviousness etc.

One has mentioned some examples of Allah Almighty's guidance to his creatures:-

When the cat excretes, it does not leave the place unless it covers its stool with the dust.
- The amazing defense in the beehive since it is defended by its bees till the last bee dies during their fight against the hornets. One might wonder Who has taught the bees to make sacrifice of themselves to keep their hive.
- The members of the beehive, who are the workers, are used to choose among the working maggots a larva that is assumed to turn out the queen by consuming the royal nutrition in case of the queen death without progeny.

- The mosquito that is used to put its eggs as bags in the quagmires so as to buoys on the surface of water. Who has taught it the buoyancy rule of Archimedes?
-Who has taught this mosquito to get its nurture from the blood of the human being? Thus, how does it get the substance to secrete in order to stop the thrombosis

of the blood and to remain fluid as soon as it inserts its suckers?
- The desert trees which engenders wings to its seeds to fly far away and through miles to look for good opportunities to be implanted over there; Who has taught these trees to make these wings and sunshades?
- Who has taught the firefly to be illuminated at night to attract the mosquitoes in order to eat them?

- And the hornet who inserts its stinger inside of the nervous center of the victim insect to be numbed and paralyzed; then, it brings it to its nest to put on it one egg….whenever it hatches, the small insect can find its nurture is fresh and ready to eat. From where does the hornet learn the surgery and the anatomy of the nervous system?

How do all these creatures get its knowledge and regulation but from its Creator?

Sheikh Muhammad Al Ghazali has written:

Whatever the human being gets through his/her effort and thought that he/she has a limited quality in comparison to what occurs in his/her worldly surroundings. I remember the time I have walked about the industries of sugar where the tunnels are abounded with juice and the ovens are full of fuel. The machines are covering a vast area of the earth. I have looked around me here and there to say spontaneously: Praise the Lord! The interior of the bee

can do this duty…the duty of making the sugar without the use of all these rotary machines and the clamorous noise!

Herewith, I have imagined that the human innovations are an intelligent hint to the wonders that occur in the universe without these complex interventions and the multiple devices.

{{Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allâh sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He has scattered therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed *Ayaât* (proofs, evidences, signs, etc.) for people of understanding.}}
(Holy Qur'an 2:164).

Why Does Allah create the human being?

Does Allah create us in vain?

The brain is aware of the existence of Allah Almighty by the use of the signs in the universe. The human brain recognizes that the Creator of the universe is Knowledgeable and Wise. Thus, it is quite impossible that He creates us in vain and without a special target.

Otherwise, this fact would not be in tandem with His wisdom, Glory be to Him.

{{"Did you think that We had created you in play (without any purpose), and that you would not be brought back to Us?" So Exalted be Allâh, the True King, Lâ ilâha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Lord of the Supreme Throne!!}}, (Holy Qur'an 23: 115-116).

Though, we cannot know what does the Creator want from us, How to worship Him as He really wants us to do? How to thank Him? This is why He has sent to us messengers to tell us about Himself (Allah Almighty) and the reason He has created the universe. Why he has created us? What is the life-style He has depicted for us to follow? And what He has preserved to us whether it is a reward or a punishment?

{{Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allâh after the Messengers. And Allâh is Ever AllPowerful, AllWise.}} (Holy Qur'an 4: 165)

The messengers, whom Allah has picked out from the best of His creatures, were under the custody and the protection of Allah. They have brought miracles from Allah Almighty to give evidence of their truthful message. Allah has sent down to them the procedure of life which must be performed by the

humankind. As it is, he who has obeyed Allah and his messengers will be perfectly rewarded by Allah Almighty; and he who has disobeyed Allah will be punished for sure.

{{And whoso obeys Allâh and the Messenger (Muhammad), then they will be in the company of those on whom Allâh has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the *Siddiqûn* (those followers of the Prophets who were first and foremost to believe in them.), the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are!}} (Holy Qur'an 4: 69).

Furthermore, Allah Almighty has confirmed in the Holy Qur'an:

{{And whosoever disobeys Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad), and transgresses His limits, He will cast him into the Fire, to abide therein; and he shall have a disgraceful torment.}} (Holy Qur'an 4:14)

Allah Almighty has explained to us that the creation is certainly for specific wisdom:

{{And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between them without purpose! That is the consideration of those who disbelieve! Then woe to those who disbelieve (in Islamic Monotheism) from the Fire!}} (Holy Qur'an 38:27)

Allah Almighty has made it clear to us to know the reason behind the creation of the humankind:

{{And I (Allâh) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).}} (Holy Qur'an 51: 56)

It goes without saying that worshiping Allah is not only praying, genuflecting, and fasting, but it contains also all the deeds and the behavior which Allah loves us to do. Taking care of the orphan is considered as worshipping. Visiting a sick person is part of worshipping. Taking away anything that might hurt the others in the road is a way of worshipping. Greeting the others is also worshipping….etc.

Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah has confirmed:

Worshipping is a name that is connected to everything Allah Almighty loves and agrees on whether it is related to sayings, interior and exterior deeds. Prayer, giving alms, fasting, doing the pilgrimage, saying the truth, loyalty, filial devotion, good contact with one's relatives, fulfillment of the pact, Ordering to work out kindness and avoiding badness, striving against the unbelievers and hypocrites, the philanthropy to the neighbours, orphans, indigent, vagabond, slaves, animals, invocation of Allah, reading…are all kinds of worshipping Allah Almighty.

The love of Allah and His messenger, the fear of Allah, deputation to His Almighty, keeping loyalty to His religion, being patient to his orders, being thankful to His beneficence, the contentment towards His fate, the reliance on him, Beseeching His mercy and apprehending his excruciation, and the like are all kinds of worshipping Allah Almighty.

Attributes of God (Allah):

To Allah belong the most beautiful names. The Holy Qur'an says:

{{" Say (O Muhammad): "Invoke Allâh or invoke the Most Beneficent (Allâh), by whatever name you invoke Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names. And offer your *Salât* (prayer) neither aloud nor in a low voice, but follow a way between.}}
(Holy Qur'an 17:110)

Sources of Islam give no less than ninety-nine different attributes to Allah Almighty. The Holy Qur'an refers to Allah as Ar-Rahman (Most Gracious), Ar-Raheem (Most Merciful) and Hakeem (All Wise) among many other names.

God does not take human form:

Many religions at some point believe, directly or indirectly, in the philosophy of anthropomorphism i.e. God is palatable to become a human. Their contention is that God Almighty is so pure and holy to the extent that He is unaware (It is true that Allah is not like us, but this does not mean that He is unaware of our situations!!!?- I would rather say: is far away) of the hardships, shortcomings and feelings of human beings. In order to set the rules for human beings, He came down to earth as a human. Let us now analyze this argument and see if it stands to reason.

Suppose I manufacture a videocassette recorder (VCR). Do I have to become a VCR to know what is good or what is bad for the VCR? What do I do? I write a manual instruction. "In order to watch a video cassette, you should insert the cassette and press on the play button. In order to stop, press on the stop button. If you want to fast forward, press on the FF button. Do not drop it from a height or it will get damaged. Do not immerse it in water or it will get ruined". These manual instructions list the various do's and don'ts for the machine. Similarly, our Lord and Creator, Allah does not need to take the human form so as to know what is good or bad for the human being. He chooses to reveal the manual instructions. The last and final manual instruction that is sent down to the human beings is the Glorious Qur'an whose 'do's' and 'don'ts' are

mentioned to the human beings through the Holy Verses.

If you allow me to compare human beings with machines, I would say humans are more complicated than the most complex machines in the world. Even the most advanced computers, which are extremely complex, are pale in comparison to the physical, psychological, genetic, and social factors that affect individuals and collective human life. The more advanced the machine is, the greater the need for its manual instruction is. By the use of the same criteria, don't the human beings require a manual instruction by which it is easy to govern their own lives?

Therefore, Allah does not come down personally to give the manual instruction. He chooses a man amongst men to deliver the message and communicates with him at a higher level through the medium of revelations. Such chosen men are called messengers and prophets of God.

God does not perform ungodly acts:

The attributes of Almighty God preclude any evil since God is the source of justice, mercy and truth. God can never be thought of as doing an ungodly act. Hence, we cannot imagine God telling a lie, being unjust, making a mistake, forgetting things, or having any such human failings. Similarly, God can do

injustice if He chooses to, but He will never do it because being unjust is an ungodly act. The Holy Qur'an says:

{{Surely! Allâh wrongs not even of the weight of an atom (or a small ant), but if there is any good (done), He doubles it, and gives from Him a great reward..}}. (Holy Qur'an 4:40)

God can be unjust if He chooses to be so, but the moment God does injustice, He ceases to be God.

God does not make mistake:

God can make mistakes if He wants to, but He does not make mistakes, because making a mistake is ungodly act. The Holy Qur'an says:
{{… My Lord is neither unaware nor He forgets,}} (Holy Qur'an 20:52)
The moment God makes a mistake, he ceases to be God.

God does not forget:

God can forget if He wants to. But God does not forget anything because forgetting is an ungodly act, which reeks of human limitations and failings. The Holy Qur'an says:
{{… My Lord is neither unaware nor He forgets,}} (Holy Qur'an 20:52)

Chapter Two

What is Islam?

Islam means submission, obedience, surrender and compliance with the command and prohibition of the commander without objections. Allah has named the true religion, 'Islam' for it is an obedience to him, submission to His Commands without any resistance, purifying acts of worship for Him, believing in His words and having faith in Him. Islam then became a proper name for the religion brought by Muhammad {P.B.U.H}.

Why was this religion named Islam?

Adherents of various religions all over the world have named their religions, either with the name of a man or a particular race like Christianity, which was named after Jesus Christ; and Buddhism was named after its founder Buddha; and Zoroastrianism was named after its founder and flag banner, Zoroaster. Judaism had also emerged among the tribe of Judah and so on. The All-Mighty Allah Himself called it Islam when He said,

{{Truly, the religion with Allâh is Islâm. (Submission to His Will)}} (Holy Qur'an 3:1)

It is only Islam that is not attributed to any particular man or nation. Its name indicates a special characteristic that the meaning of Islam denotes. It is evident in this name that no man has any role in bringing this religion into existence and that it is not peculiar with any nation to the exclusion of others. Its only goal is to make all people of the earth have characteristics of Islam. So, whoever is characterized with the qualities of Islam among ancient people and contemporary people is a Muslim, just as he shall be called a Muslim, and anyone who possesses its qualities among the coming generations.

The Message of Islam:

The most important message of Islam is the absolute Unity of God-that there is only One Supreme Being who has no partners and is not dependent on anyone or anything. He is the creator of everything and the whole universe is under His control. Since the total submission of one's will to Allah represents the essence of worship, Islam is the worship of Allah alone and the avoidance of worship directed to any person, place or thing other than Allah. In essence, Islam calls man away from the worship of creation and invites him to worship only its Creator. Allah is the only one deserving man's worship as it is only by His will that prayers are answered. Hence prayers to the non-living such as the sun, fire, and to humans whether they are

Jesus, Moses or even Muhammad are rejected, as Allah informs us in the opening chapter of the Holy Qur'an,:

{{You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).}}
(Holy Qur'an 1:4)

The Six Pillars of Faith in Islam:

1. Belief in Allah:

You must believe in His Lordship; that He is the Lord, the Creator, the Possessor and the Controller of all matters. You must also believe in His right to be worshipped, that He is the only True Deity, that all deities besides Him are false. You must believe in His Names and Attributes, that He has Beautiful Names and perfect Sublime Attributes.

You must also believe in His Oneness in all that, that He has no partner in His Lordship, nor in His right to be worshipped or in His Names and Attributes. You must also believe that neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him; that He knows all that is hidden and evident; and that to him belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. You must also believe that He rose high over His Throne above His creation, and that He is with them by His knowledge and He knows their conditions, hears their utterances, sees their places and controls their affairs. He provides for the poor, gives relief to the dejected, gives authority to whom He wills, withdraws it from whom He wills and that He is Able to do all things.

2. Belief in His angels:

A Muslim must believe in the angels; that is to say, it is Allah Who has created them and describes them as, “honoured slaves", they does not speak until He has spoken and they act on His Command. Allah conceals them from our eyes so that we do not see them. But Allah sometimes shows some of them to some of His Prophets and Messengers.

Angels have functions assigned to them. Gabriel is assigned to Revelations which he brings from Allah to whosoever He wishes of His Messengers. Among them are: an angel assigned to taking the souls, another to the protection of mankind, another to recording of their deeds…etc.

3. Belief in His Books

To believe that Allah revealed Books to his Prophets and Messengers, in order to explain the truth and call to it.

These Books are many. Among them are the Scripture of the Prophet Abraham, the Torah of the Prophet Moses, the Psalms given to the Prophet David and the Gospel which was brought by the Prophet Jesus Christ, may peace be upon all of them.

Belief in the Previous Books lies in believing that it is Allah Who revealed them to His Messengers

and that they contained the Law that Allah wanted to be conveyed to people at that time.

All these Books that Allah informs us about have all become extinct. The scripture of Abraham does no longer exist in the world. As for the Torah, the Gospel and the Psalms, even though they do exist by name in the hands of Jews and Christians, they have become altered, interpolated and adulterated and many of their original contents are missing. The lines which are not part of them have been included in them, and they are attributed to those who are not their authors. The Old Testament for instance, has more than forty books, and only five of them were attributed to Moses. As for the existing gospels of today, nothing of them is attributed to Jesus. On the Other hand, the last Book, which is revealed by Allah, is the Qur'an which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad. It has always been and is still protected and preserved by Allah. No change or alteration has crept into any of its letters, words, vowels or meanings.

4. Belief in His Messengers

To believe that Allah sent Messengers to His creation in order to give them glad tidings of Paradise if they believe in Allah and His Messengers, and to warn them of punishment if they disobey. There are many messengers. The first of them was Noah and the last of them is Muhammad {P.B.U.H}. Allah has told us stories

about them in the Holy Qur'an like Abraham, Moses, Jesus, David, John Zakariah and Saleh. There are also some prophets whom we know nothing for, Allah tells us nothing.

All these Messengers were humans since they are created by Allah. They possessed nothing of the qualities of Lordship or Godship. Therefore, no act of worship should be directed to them for they could not avail themselves of any harm or benefit. The Prophets are honoured slaves, whom Allah chose. They are honoured with the Message and described as His slaves. Their religion is Islam (Submission to God's orders), and Allah will not accept any other religion besides it.

The basic messages of the Prophets were one but their Laws differ.

The final of all these Laws is that of Muhammad. It abrogates all other previous laws. His Message is the last of all Divine Messages and he is the last of all Messengers. Whoever believes in a Prophet among them should believe in all of them and whoever denies anyone of them, it means he/she has denied all of them.

5. Belief in the Last Day

Believe that the present life is only a trial preparation for the next perennial realm of existence.

This life is a test for each individual for the everlasting life that comes after death. A day will come when the whole universe will be destroyed and the dead will be resurrected for judgment by God. This day will be the beginning of a life that will never end. This day is the Day of Judgment. On that day, all people will be rewarded by God according to their beliefs and deeds.

After having sent the Prophet Muhammad to call people to Islam, God does not accept adherence to any religion other than Islam, when someone rejects belief in God, His Prophet Muhammad, or His religion of Islam, it is just that he or she will be punished in the Hereafter. The truth is completely enlightened and does not need more explanation for it simply does not contain conflicts in the Holy Qur'an, the Sayings of the prophet Muhammad, and the Islamic creed.

Those who die while believing that “There is no true god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger (Prophet) of Allah” and are Muslim will be rewarded on that day and will be admitted to Paradise forever, as Allah Almighty has said:

{{But they who believe and do righteous deeds - those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally.}} (Holy Qur'an 2:82)

But those who die at the time they do not believe that “There is no true god but Allah, and

Muhammad is the Messenger (Prophet) of Allah", in other words, they are not Muslim and they will lose Paradise forever to be sent to Hellfire, as God has said:

{{And whoever seeks a religion other than Islâm, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.}}
(Holy Qur'an 3: 85)

Those who die before Prophet Muhammad {P.B.U.H}, and were following the real message of Allah which is sent through previous messengers (Jesus, Moses…) are considered to be believers. It's quite clear to further that all the messengers of Allah are brothers and they love each other. It occurs that some people, who have followed them, try to interpolate the Holy message and to alter it to their personal gluttony and whims.

6. Belief in pre-decree.

You must believe that Allah knows what happened and what shall happen; that He knows the conditions, deeds, life spans and provisions of His slaves.

Some Beauties of Islam:

1-It is the religion of Allah which He has chosen for Himself, sent with His Messengers and through which He allowed His slaves to worship Him.

2-Comprehensiveness: One of the most prominent beauties of this religion is its comprehensiveness for everything. This religion encompasses all that one has to do with the Creator like His Names, Attributes and rights; and all that one has to do with the creatures like laws, obligations, manners and relationship.

3- Islam is linking man to his Creator directly; without a priest, reverend, or holy secret. This direct connection between the Creator and the created is a connection that links the heart with its Lord and it thereby gets light, guidance and loftiness; the heart will seek perfection; and deems itself high above insignificant and debased things.

4- It caters for benefits of this world and the Hereafter. The Islamic Law is based on protection of the benefits of this world and the Hereafter to the extent to lead to the perfection of good morals. As for the explanation of the benefits of the Hereafter, the religion of Islam has explained all the necessary details and left nothing without dealing with it. It has expounded it to satisfy all the human needs to the point to let nothing of

it unknown. Islam promises the bliss in the Hereafter and warns the humankind against its agony.

Concerning the benefits of this world, Allah ordained in this religion to perform all matters that can protect all the elementary needs of the human being: her/his religion, life, property, posterity, dignity and intelligence.

Concerning honourable conducts, Islam enjoins that overtly and covertly so much so that it forbids all sorts of debasing manners. Among the apparent noble conducts that Islam enjoins are cleanliness and purification which are very different from all kinds of impurities and dirt. Islam recommends using of perfume and outward adornment; but it forbids filthy behaviours like adultery, fornication, consuming alcohol; eating dead animals, blood and pork (it is fine to just say pork for it simply the flesh of the pig). It is well-known that Islam enjoins eating of lawful good things as well as it prohibits wastefulness and extravagance.

As for the inner purification, Islam prohibits undesirable conducts and encourages commendable ones. Among the forbidden manners are: lies, obscenity, anger, jealousy, stinginess, debasing oneself, love of prestige and this world, arrogance, haughtiness and hypocrisy. Among the commended behaviours are: good conduct, good companionship to all people by

being kind to them, justice and fairness, humility, truthfulness, magnanimity, generosity, dependence on Allah, sincerity in worshipping acts, fear of Allah, patience and showing gratitude.

How Does Someone Become a Muslim?

Simply by saying with conviction, “La ilâha illa Allah, Muhammadun rasoolu Allah,” This is how one converts to Islam and becomes a Muslim. This saying means, “There is no true god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah (God).” The first part, “There is no true god but God,” means that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah Almighty – God- alone, and that Allah-God- has neither partner nor son.

To be a Muslim, one should also:
- Believe that the Holy Qur’an is the literal word of God revealed by Him.
- Believe that the Day of Judgment (the Day of Resurrection) is true and will come, as God has promised in the Qur'an
- Accept Islam as his or her religion.
- Not worship anything or anyone except Allah Almighty.

What Are the Five Pillars of Islam?

The Five Pillars of Islam are the framework of a Muslim’s life. They are:

1) The Testimony of Faith:

The testimony of faith is saying with conviction, “La ilâha illa Allah, Muhammadun rasoolu Allah.” This saying means, “There is no true god but God (Allah), and Muhammad is the Messenger (Prophet) of God.” The first part, “There is no true god but God,” means that none has the right to be worshipped but God alone, and that God has neither partner nor son. This testimony of faith is called the 'Shahada', a simple formula which should be said with conviction in order to convert to Islam. The testimony of faith is the most important pillar of Islam.

2) Prayer:

Muslims perform five prayers a day. Each prayer does not take more than a few minutes to perform. Prayer in Islam is a direct link between the worshipper and God. There are no intermediaries between God and the worshipper. In prayer, a person feels inner happiness, peace, and comfort, and that God is pleased with him or her.

Prayers are performed at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night. A Muslim may pray almost anywhere is assumed to be clean such as in fields, offices, factories, or universities…

3) Alms Giving; Zakât, (obligatory support of the Needy):

All things belong to God, and wealth is therefore held by human beings in trust. The original meaning of the word zakat is both 'purification' and 'growth.' Giving zakat means 'giving a specified percentage on certain properties to certain classes of needy people.

Our possessions are purified by setting aside a small portion for those in need, and it is alike the pruning of plants for this cutting let back balances and encourages new growth.

A person may also give as much as he or she pleases as voluntary alms or charity.

4) Fasting the Month of Ramadan:

Every year in the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sundown, abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations. Although the fast is beneficial to health, it is regarded principally as a method of spiritual self-purification. By cutting oneself off the worldly comforts even if it is performed for a short time.

5) The Pilgrimage to Makkah:

The annual pilgrimage (Hajj) to Makkah is an obligation once during a lifetime for those who are physically and financially able to perform it.

SOURCES OF ISLAM:

A. The Glorious Qur'an:

The Qur'an was not the first Book to be revealed, nor was Muhammad the first Messenger to be sent. Allah has revealed the Scriptures to Abraham; Torah to Moses and the Gospel to Jesus. All these Books were revelations from Allah to His Prophets and Messengers.

As for the Qur'an, Allah Himself guarantees its protection, so it is today the verbatim of what was revealed to the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, over fourteen centuries ago:

{{Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr* (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption).}} (Holy Qur'an 15:9)

The Qur'an, the last revealed word of God, is the primary source of every Muslim's faith and practice. It deals with all the subjects, which concern human beings:

Wisdom, doctrine, worship, transactions, law, etc., but its basic theme is the relationship between God and His creatures. At the same time, it provides guidelines and detailed teachings for a just society,

proper human conduct, and an equitable economic system. It also contains the fundamentals for which Allah sent the Messengers.

The Qur'an guides mankind to the most righteous path in all aspects of their life, for it contains a call to belief in the Oneness of Allah, and mention His Names, Attributes and deeds. It calls to belief in the authenticity of what the Prophets and Messengers brought. It affirms the Resurrection, reward, reckoning and establishes evidences for that. It narrates the stories of past nations, the punishment meted out to them in this world as well as the torment and exemplary punishment that awaits them in the Hereafter.

B. The Prophetic Sunnah:

Allah revealed the Qur'an to the Messenger and revealed to him an alike sayings which are named as the Prophetic Sunnah to further the explanation of the Holy Qur'an.

The Sunnah is the second source of the religion of Islam. It means all what is reported from the Prophet – with well-connected and authentic chain of transmitters – of his sayings, deeds, confirmations and qualities. It is also a revelation from Allah to His Messenger Muhammad, for the Prophet did not speak of his own desire. Allah Almighty says:

{{Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired.}} (Holy Qur'an 53: 3-4)

The Prophet only conveys to people what he is commanded to convey. Allah says about him,

{{ Say (O Muhammad):"I am not a new thing among the Messengers (of Allâh) (i.e. I am not the first Messenger) nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am but a plain Warner."}} (Holy Qur'an 46: 9)

The pure Sunnah is the practical implementation of the rules, beliefs, acts of worship, kinds of relationship and manners that Islam enjoins.
Allah Almighty has commanded the believers to emulate him in all his deeds and sayings to ensure that their faith is complete. He says:

{{Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allâh and the Last Day and remembers Allâh much.}}
(Holy Qur'an 33: 21)

And Allah says:
{{ ..And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it), ..}} (Holy Qur'an 59: 7)

Chapter Three

The Prophet of Islam

The Prophet Muhammad –peace be upon him- was born in Mecca, a city that is located in modern-day Saudi Arabia, in 570 AD (53 BH). His father, Abdullah bin Abd Al-Muttalib, died before his birth. His mother, Aminah bint Wahb, died of illness when he was six years old. As an orphan, Muhammad was sent to be raised by his grandfather, who died two years later.

Finally, the young boy passed to the care of Abu Talib who is known as his paternal uncle. Some Muslim scholars underscore that these early tough events, which have befallen in the life of the messenger, enable him to stand up against the hard confrontation of the polytheists and the unbelievers.

Personal Character:

As a young man, Muhammad worked as a shepherd, and later as an apprentice trader for his uncle. As he grew, Muhammad gained a reputation for thoughtfulness and integrity. People nicknamed him Al-Sadiq (The Truthful), because he never told a lie; and Al-Amin (The Trustworthy), because he never

cheated. He was called upon frequently to mediate disputes between the noble people of Mecca. Muhammad was also known for his disdain of the pagan culture that predominated among the people of Mecca. He never worshipped the idols of Quraysh, the tribe to which he belonged. Instead, he made long retreats to a mountain cave called Hira', outside of Mecca, where he meditated. When he was 25 years old, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, a 40-year-old Meccan widow known for her strong character, successful trading business, and nobility, proposed to him. They married in the year 595 AD (28 BH).

The First Revelation:

At the age of 40, while he was in solitude at Hira', Muhammad experienced the first incident of revelation. He said the Angel Gabriel came to him and instructed him in the following words, which later became known as the first revealed verses of the Quran:

{{Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), Has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen [the first person to write was Prophet Idrees (Enoch)], Has taught man that which he knew not.}} (Holy Qur'an 96:1-5)

Muhammad’s response to this initial experience was plenty of fear and shock. He returned home and was comforted by his tender wife Khadijah, who later became the first believer in his message.
In the following years, the Angel Gabriel instructed Muhammad to take the words of the Qur'an to the public.

Mecca, at that time, was a center for trade and idol worship in the whole country of Saudi Arabia. This made it a city of considerable prestige and wealth. The city’s leaders feared Muhammad’s monotheistic message for it would jeopardize that actual status.

His Teachings:

Muhammad led a humble life: he had never distinguished himself from the others--he had no body guards, and moved without an entourage. He told people that his job as a messenger of God was simply to reaffirm what God had already revealed to humanity through previous prophets, including Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

In the monotheistic worldview, God created humankind as dignified creatures endowed with free will. Men and women are entrusted with leading a life of goodness, in the hope of reaping the ultimate benefits in the daily life and in the next life. Although no single verse summarizes all the teachings of Islam,

the following excerpts from the Holy Qur'an represent the Straight Path God has chosen for His believers:

{{ Say (O Muhammad): "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents; kill not your children because of poverty - We provide sustenance for you and for them; come not near to *Al Fawâhish* (shameful sins, illegal sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly, and kill not anyone whom Allâh has forbidden, except for a just cause (according to Islamic law). This He has commanded you that you may understand. "And come not near to the orphan's property, except to improve it, until he (or she) attains the age of full strength; and give full measure and full weight with justice. We burden not any person, but that which he can bear. And whenever you give your word (i.e. judge between men or give evidence, etc.), say the truth even if a near relative is concerned, and fulfill the Covenant of Allâh, This He commands you, that you may remember. "And verily, this (i.e. Allah's Commandments mentioned above) is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become *Al Muttaqûn* (the pious)."}} (Holy Qur'an 6: 151-153)

The poor, the oppressed and women were among the early believers in Islam. The Qur'an declared

equality as a universal value that is applied to all kinds of people in the world. Additionally, the Qur'an prohibited Mecca’s unacceptable pagan practices, such as female infanticide as well as the holy verses had encouraged freeing slaves for the sake of Allah. Muhammad taught that there should be no distinction between Arabs and non-Arabs, or between Whites and Blacks. Muhammad said all humans are the same before Allah.

Persecution:

The stunning rhythm and depth of content which is contained in the Qur'an’s verses captured the attention of even the most eloquent Arabs. Mecca’s pagans disparaged Muhammad as a mere poet, but the Muslims believed in the Qur'an as the ultimate miracle of faith; a testimony in support of Muhammad’s prophecy. The early Muslims cherished the verses, memorized them, wrote them down, and struggled to work them out in their quotidian life. The pagans of Mecca ridiculed Muhammad’s claim to prophecy, and rejected his teachings. For the next decade, Muhammad - peace be upon him, and the early Muslims were subjected to inhumane treatment. Muslims were killed, tortured and boycotted for three years; their properties and holdings were taken by force. In response, Muhammad - peace be upon him, encouraged his followers to migrate to neighboring cities and states. He told them about Christian Abyssinia (today’s Ethiopia)

for it would offer them a good refuge because it was ruled by a just king.
Muhammad - peace be upon him, tried to take his message outside of Mecca. He went to a nearby mountain town called Ta'if, but its leaders sent their youth to throw stones at Muhammad - peace be upon him - until, after suffering considerable physical injury, he left.

Migration:

Muhammad's hardships mounted when his uncle Abu Talib passed away, leaving him without a strong ally in Mecca. Soon after his uncle's death, he was secretly visited by leaders of the two major tribes of Madinah, a town 300 miles to the northeast of Mecca. The leaders, whose tribesmen fought one another in lengthy wars, converted on the spot to Islam for they were the neighbors of the Jews who used to tell them about the last messenger whose time is coming sooner.

The people of the Madinah vied out the Jews to be the followers of the messenger of the end of the world. Thence, they invited Muhammad - peace be upon him, and the Meccan Muslims to live in the Madinah. The Meccan Muslims left their homes gradually. Some of them have left their families, money, and their holdings for the sake of Allah Almighty.

Their excruciating sufferance was bearable for the love of their Lord and His messenger. One can call their Love and loyalty as the best feelings that one can utter and be aware of. Their departure was soon discovered by the leaders of Quraysh, who decided to eliminate Muhammad, the last one to leave. But during the night when they were about to kill him, Muhammad, peace be upon him, had escaped with his closest friend Abu Bakr, may Allah be praised with him. In the Medina, safe from the Meccan persecution, Muhammad was now free to call others to Islam, and his followers increased rapidly. To Muslims, he was both a messenger of God who shared with them divine revelation, and a political leader who governed their public affairs.

Under the guidance of Muhammad, the Charter of Madinah was developed. Some people argue that the Charter was the first pluralistic constitutional framework known to mankind. Not only did it recognize the several tribes engaging in free trade inside and outside of the Madinah, it also acknowledged Jewish tribes as a collective entity bonded with Muslims through attachment to a system of rights and obligations. The Charter of the Madinah created an environment where all could lead a moral life and band together to oppose aggression of any sort.

Mecca's leadership attempted to prevent Muhammad's movement from establishing the roots of Islam in the Madinah. They organized military

expeditions against the Islamic city, but they were eventually defeated.

Spread of Islam:

Forced to recognize that they could not eliminate Islam- the divine message, or defeat the Muslims, the pagans of Mecca concluded the Treaty of Hudaybiyah with the Muslims. They agreed on maintaining peace and on observing neutrality in their conflicts with third parties. Effectively, the treaty recognized Muslims as a new force in Arabia and acknowledged their freedom to move unmolested throughout the region. During the months of tranquility that followed, Muslims sent preachers to all directions; many people and tribes in Arabia converted to Islam.

In 630 AD (8 AH) Meccan allies breached the treaty when they massacred a group of traveling Muslims. Following the attack, great numbers of Muslims get gathered in the Madinah. Then, this army marched towards Mecca. The numbers and dedication of Muslims astounded the leaders of the city. The prophet and his followers decided not to fight. Entering Mecca, Muhammad gave amnesty to all people who did not want to fight, and so stayed inside their homes. Except for few minor incidents, the opening of Mecca was one of the most astonishingly bloodless military victories in the world history.

The people of Mecca, who had relentlessly oppressed Muhammad and his followers for more than two decades, feared retribution. However, they were treated with the greatest magnanimity. In a grand public gathering at the town center, Muhammad asked them, “What do you think I will do with you?”, “You are kind, and the son of a kind brother,” their leaders answered. “Go, you are free!” Muhammad replied. The Muslims understood these words to mean total forgiveness. No home was pillaged; no property was confiscated.

Over the years, the pagan Meccans converted to Islam. The Prophet removed all the idols in and around the Ka`bah. The cubic monument at the center of the city is believed to have been built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. Ever since, the Muslim call to prayer has been heard five times a day in this ancient sanctuary.

Prophet Muhammad’s Final Years:

Muhammad returned to Madinah, which continued to be the political capital of the Islamic city-state. In 632 AD (10 AH) Muhammad went to Mecca as a pilgrim as he believed it was for the last time of his life. The revelation he received over there included the following verse:

{{This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islâm as your religion.}} (Holy Qur'an 5: 3)

Within few months after returning to Madinah, Muhammad, peace be upon him, died after a brief illness. He is buried in the grand Prophet's Masjid(it is better to say Masjid for the mosque means the place that gathers mosquito's- Non Muslims who have used that term) in Madinah.

Some of his Words:

- "One who covers up the failings of someone in this world will have his shortcomings covered up by God on the Day of Judgment." (Muslim: 6743)

- "Being rich does not mean having a great amount of property, but [it] is being content [with what one has]." (Bukhari: 6446)

- "(God) has revealed to me that you should adopt humility so that no one oppresses another."
(Abu Dawood: 4897)

- A person once asked the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "What is faith?" The Prophet replied: "When a good deed becomes a source of pleasure for you and an evil deed becomes a source of disgust, then

you are a believer." He was then asked: "What is a sin?" The Prophet said: "Whenever something pricks your conscience, give it up." (Ahmed: 22856)

- “Charity does not diminish wealth.” (Muslim: 6756)

- "God does not judge you according to your bodies and appearances, but He looks into your hearts and observes your deeds." (Muslim: 6707)

- “The best of you is the one who is the best to his family.” (Tirmidhi: 4269)

- "If you guarantee me six things on your part I shall guarantee you Paradise: Speak the truth when you talk, keep a promise when you make it, when you are trusted with something fulfill your trust, avoid sexual immorality, lower your gaze (in modesty), and restrain your hands from injustice." (Ahmed: 23428)

- "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is oppressed." People asked, "…It is right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?" The Prophet said, "By preventing him from oppressing others. (Bukhari: 2444)

- "Be kind, for whenever kindness becomes part of something, it beautifies it. Whenever it is taken from something, it leaves it tarnished." He also said: "Make

things simple and do not complicate them. Calm people and do not drive them away." (Muslim: 6767)

- "Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, the nights." (Bukhari: 39)

- "During [a military expedition], a woman was found killed, so [the Prophet Muhammad] forbade the killing of women, children, and monks (nuns). The Muslim fighters are requested to fight and kill only the fighters. (Bukhari: 3014)

- "The best thing in this world is a virtuous woman (wife)." (Muslim: 3716)

Chapter Four

Proofs of the authenticity of Islam

Among the things that testify to the fact that the Qur'an is a revelation from Allah is that it contains stories of the past nations, prophesied future events that came to happen as it has been prophesied, and the fact that it mentions many scientific facts that have not been discovered until recently. Another proof of its being a divinely revealed Book is that the Prophet on whom it was revealed was unknown with anything similar to that or reported to have known anything similar to the Qur'an.

It also contains many proofs and signs that dazzle the scientists and that are suitable for all generations and ages; and in which many scholars and researchers find what they look for.

Here are some examples that reveal some of these facts:

1- Samples of Scientific Miracles in the Holy Qur'an:

a- The smothering of the smelling in the highest places

{{And whomsoever Allâh wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islâm, and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky. Thus Allâh puts the wrath on those who believe not.}}
(Holy Qur'an 6:125)

The Scientific Fact:-

People are used to think that whenever they go to the highest places, they would smell the freshest air they could ever smell. Though, the new discovery of the modern science has stated that whenever the more the person goes upwards the lesser the oxygen gets in the air. The scholar have assured frankly about this absolute truth that have been already confirmed in the Holy Qur'an. It goes without saying that this utter confirmation underlines the truthfulness of the Holy Qur'an and its enunciation from the Lord.

b- Pharaoh died because he got drowned:

{{And We took the Children of Israel across the sea, and Fir'aun (Pharaoh) with his hosts followed them

in oppression and enmity, till when drowning overtook him, he said: "I believe that *Lâ ilâha illa (Huwa)*: (none has the right to be worshipped but) He," in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am one of the Muslims (those who submit to Allâh's Will).". Now (you believe) while you refused to believe before and you were one of the *Mufsidûn* (evil-doers, corrupts, etc.)}}
(Holy Qur'an 10:90-92)

The Scientific Fact:-

The body of Pharaoh was invited to France. Pharaoh was presented in France as a respectful king even though he was dead many centuries ago. A good number of scholars in medicine has greeted that body and received in their laboratories. An outstanding doctor, Maurice Bucaille, had been studying the body of Pharaoh for three days. This doctor has discovered that the main reason of Pharaoh's death was drowning. He confirmed this utter fact to his friends. One of the doctors had told him that this went in tandem with what the Muslims claimed its confirmation in the Holy Qur'an. All of a sudden, Doctor Bucaille said: "This must not be a word of a man but the Holy Word of God!" Doctor Bucaille went to Saudi Arabia in a scientific seminar. He asked about the drowning of the body of Pharaoh that had been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as well as he mentioned that he himself discovered the fact while treating the body of Pharaoh. As soon as he had seen the verses of the Qur'an, he spontaneously stated, "there is no god but Allah and

Muhammad is the messenger of Allah". He has written a marvelous book whose title is: Science in the Bible and the Holy Qur'an". This Book has confirmed many scientific matters that are simply in harmony with the holy verses of the Qur'an.

c- The Lowest Area on Earth:

{{The Romans have been defeated. In the nearer land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine), and they, after their defeat, will be victorious. Within three to nine years. The decision of the matter, before and after (these events) is only with Allâh, (before the defeat of Romans by the Persians, and after, i.e. the defeat of the Persians by the Romans). And on that Day, the believers (i.e. Muslims) will rejoice (at the victory given by Allâh to the Romans against the Persians), With the help of Allâh, He helps whom He wills, and He is the AllMighty, the Most Merciful. (It is) a Promise of Allâh (i.e. Allâh will give victory to the Romans against the Persians), and Allâh fails not in His Promise, but most of men know not.}} (Holy Qur'an 30:1-6)

The Scientific Fact:-

History books tell us about a battle between the Persian and the Byzantine empires – the latter signifies the eastern part of the Roman Empire - which was located in the area between Adhra`at and Basra, near

the Dead Sea. The battle, which occurred in 619 A.C., ended with the victory of the Persians.

The Romans received a severe blow in that battle and everyone at that time expected their kingdom to fall. Surprisingly, they were engaged in another battle in 622 A.C. in the area of Nineveh where they defeated the Persians and occupied many areas. Some months later, the Byzantines signed an agreement with the Persians according to which they returned all previously occupied areas.

Geographical atlases show that the lowest spot on the surface of the earth is the area near the Dead Sea where the surface of the earth is as low as 395 meters below sea level. Photos taken by satellites support this fact.

Not to mention that the pagan Quraysh of Mecca rejoiced at the overthrow of Rome by Persia. They were pro-Persian, and in their heart of hearts they hoped that the nascent movement of Islam, which at that time was, from a worldly point of view, very weak and helpless, would also collapse under their persecution. But they misread the true Signs of the times. They are told here that they would soon be disillusioned in their calculations, and it actually so happened at the battle of Issus in 622 (the year of Hijrat) and in 624, when Heraclius carried his campaign into the heart of Persia and the Meccan Quraysh were

beaten off at Badr. (Footnote of The Holy Qur'an English Translation in the Madinah, p1176/3506)

d- The Qur'an on the Origin of the Universe:

The science of modern cosmology, observational and theoretical, clearly indicates that, at one point in time, the whole universe was nothing but a cloud of 'smoke' (i.e. an opaque highly dense and hot gaseous composition).1 This is one of the undisputed principles of standard modern cosmology. Scientists now can observe new stars forming out of the remnants of that 'smoke'.

The illuminating stars we see at night were, just as was the whole universe, in that 'smoke' material. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{{…Then He *Istawâ* (rose over) towards the heaven when it was smoke.}}
(Holy Qur'an 41:11)

Because the earth and the heavens above (the sun, the moon, stars, planets, galaxies, etc.) have been formed from this same 'smoke,' we conclude that the earth and the heavens were one connected entity. Then out of this homogeneous 'smoke,' they formed and separated from each other. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{{Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?}} (Holy Qur'an 21: 30)

Dr. Alfred Kroner is one of the world's renowned geologists. He is Professor of Geology and the Chairman of the Department of Geology at the Institute of Geosciences, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany. He said:

"Thinking where Muhammad came from . . . I think it is almost impossible that he could have known about things like the common origin of the universe, because scientists have only found out within the last few years, with very complicated and advanced technological methods, that this is the case."

Also he said:

"Somebody who did not know something about nuclear physics fourteen hundred years ago could not, I think, be in a position to find out from his own mind, for instance, that the earth and the heavens had the same origin."

Ref:
- *The First Three Minutes, a Modern View of the Origin of the Universe*, Weinberg, pp. 94-105.

e- The Qur’an on Mountains:

A book entitled *Earth* is a basic reference textbook in many universities around the world. One of its two authors is Professor Emeritus Frank Press. He was the Science Advisor to former US President Jimmy Carter, and for 12 years was the President of the National Academy of Sciences, Washington, DC. His book says that mountains have underlying roots. These roots are deeply embedded in the ground, thus, mountains have a shape like a peg. This is how the Qur’an has described mountains. Allah has said in the Qur’an:

{{And the mountains as pegs...}} (Holy Qur'an 78: 7)

Modern earth sciences have proven that mountains have deep roots under the surface of the ground and that these roots can reach several times their elevations above the surface of the ground. 1 So the most suitable word to describe mountains on the basis of this information is the word ‘peg,’ since most of a properly set peg is hidden under the surface of the ground.

The history of science tells us that the theory of mountains having deep roots was introduced only in 1865 by the Astronomer Royal, Sir George Airy. 2 Mountains also play an important role in stabilizing the

crust of the earth. 3 They hinder the shaking of the earth. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{{And He has affixed into the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you,..}}
(Holy Qur'an 21: 30)

Likewise, the modern theory of plate tectonics holds that mountains work as stabilizers for the earth. This knowledge about the role of mountains as stabilizers for the earth has just begun to be understood in the framework of plate tectonics since the late 1960's. Could anyone during the time of the Prophet Muhammad have known of the true shape of mountains?

Could anyone imagine that the solid massive mountain which he sees before him actually extends deep into the earth and has a root, as scientists affirm? Modern geology has confirmed the truth of the Qur'anic verses.

Ref: - Earth, Press and Siever, p. 435. Also see *Earth Science*, Tarbuck and Lutgens, p. 157.
- *The Geological Concept of Mountains in the Qur'an*, El-Naggar,p. 5. p. 44-45

f- The Qur'an on Clouds:

Scientists have studied cloud types and have realized that rain clouds are formed and shaped according to definite systems and certain steps connected with certain types of wind and clouds.

One kind of rain cloud is the cumulonimbus cloud. Meteorologists have studied how cumulonimbus clouds are formed and how they produce rain, hail, and lightning.

They have found that cumulonimbus clouds go through the following steps to produce rain:

1) The clouds are pushed by the wind: Cumulonimbus clouds begin to form when wind pushes some small pieces of clouds (cumulus clouds) to an area where these clouds converge.

2) Joining: Then the small clouds join together forming a larger cloud.

3) Stacking: When the small clouds join together, updrafts within the larger cloud increase. The updrafts near the center of the cloud are stronger than those near the edges. These updrafts cause the cloud body to grow vertically, so the cloud is stacked up. This vertical growth causes the cloud body to stretch into cooler

regions of the atmosphere, where drops of water and hail formulate and begin to grow larger and larger. When these drops of water and hail become too heavy for the updrafts to support them, they begin to fall from the cloud as rain, hail, etc...

Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{{See you not that Allâh drives the clouds gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap of layers, and you see the rain comes forth from between them. And He sends down from the sky hail (like) mountains, and strike therewith whom He will, and averts it from whom He wills. The vivid flash of its (clouds) lightning nearly blinds the sight.}}
(Holy Qur'an 24: 43)

Meteorologists have only recently come to know these details of cloud formation, structure, and function by using advanced equipment like planes, satellites, computers, balloons, and other equipment, to study wind and its direction, to measure humidity and its variations, and to determine the levels and variations of atmospheric pressure.

The preceding verse, after mentioning clouds and rain, speaks about hail and lightning:

{{**....** And He sends down from the sky hail (like) mountains, and strike therewith whom He will, and

averts it from whom He wills. The vivid flash of its (clouds) lightning nearly blinds the sight.}}
(Holy Qur'an 24: 43)

Urologists have found that these cumulonimbus clouds, that shower hail, reach a height of 25,000 to 30,000 ft (4.7 to 5.7 miles),2 like mountains, as the Qur'an said: {{**....** And He sends down from the sky hail (like) mountains,}}

This verse may raise a question. Why does the verse say "its lightning" in a reference to the hail? Does this mean that hail is the major factor in producing lightning? Let us see what the book entitled *Meteorology Today* says about this. It says that a cloud becomes electrified as hail falls through a region in the cloud of super cooled droplets and ice crystals. As liquid droplets collide with a hailstone, they freeze on contact and release latent heat.

This keeps the surface of the hailstone warmer than that of the surrounding ice crystals. When the hailstone comes in contact with an ice crystal, an important phenomenon occurs: electrons flow from the colder object toward the warmer object. Hence, the hailstone becomes negatively charged. The same effect occurs when supercooled droplets come in contact with a hailstone and tiny splinters of positively charged ice break off.

These lighter positively charged particles are then carried to the upper part of the cloud by updrafts. The hail, left with a negative charge, falls towards the bottom of the cloud, thus the lower part of the cloud becomes negatively charged. These negative charges are then discharged as lightning. 1 We conclude from this that hail is the major factor in producing lightning.

This information on lightning was discovered recently. Until 1600 AD, Aristotle's ideas on meteorology were dominant. For example, he said that the atmosphere contains two kinds of exhalation, moist and dry. He also said that thunder is the sound of the collision of the dry exhalation with the neighbouring clouds, and lightning is the inflaming and burning of the dry exhalation with a thin and faint fire.1 These are some of the ideas on meteorology that were dominant at the time of the Qur'an's revelation, fourteen centuries ago.

Also:

Allah Said in Holly Qur'an:

{{And We send the winds fertilizing (to fill heavily the clouds with water), then caused the water (rain) to descend from the sky, and We gave it to you to drink, and it is not you who are the owners of its stores [i.e. to give water to whom you like or to withhold it from whom you like].}} (Holy Qur'an 15:22)

The previous chapter of Holy Qur'an , includes a great scientific fact , where the wind has a part in the inoculation of some plants , and also the word can be used to show the effect of winds to collect different clouds with two different electric charges (positive & negative) , in which is considered as a marriage or an inoculation.

Ref.:

- *Atmosphere*, Anthes and others, pp. 268-269, and *Elements of Meteorology*, Miller and Thompson, p. 141.
- *Meteorology Today*, Ahrens, p. 437.
- *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English: Meteorologica*, vol 3, Ross and others, pp. 369a-369b.

g-The Qur'an on Deep Seas and Internal Waves:

Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{{ Or [the state of a disbeliever] is like the darkness in a vast deep sea, overwhelmed with a great wave topped by a great wave, topped by dark clouds, darkness, one above another, if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! And he for whom Allâh has not appointed light, for him there is no light...}}
(Holly Qur'an, 24:40)

This verse mentions the darkness found in deep seas and oceans, where if a man stretches out his hand,

he cannot see it. The darkness in deep seas and oceans is found around a depth of 200 meters and below. At this depth, there is almost no light. Below a depth of 1000 meters there is no light at all. Human beings are not able to dive more than forty meters without the aid of submarines or special equipment. Human beings cannot survive unaided in the deep dark part of the oceans, such as at a depth of 200 meters.

Scientists have recently discovered this darkness by means of special equipment and submarines that have enabled them to dive into the depths of the oceans.

We can also understand from the following sentences in the previous verse, **"...**in a vast deep sea, overwhelmed with a great wave topped by a great wave, topped by dark clouds, darkness,**..."**, that the deep waters of seas and oceans are covered by waves, and above these waves are other waves. It is clear that the second sets of waves are the surface waves that we see, because the verse mentions that above the second waves there are clouds, But what about the first waves? Scientists have recently discovered that there are internal waves which "occur on density interfaces between layers of different densities." The internal waves cover the deep waters of seas and oceans because the deep waters have a higher density than the waters above them. Internal waves act like surface waves. They can also break, just like surface waves.

Internal waves cannot be seen by the human eye, but they can be detected by studying temperature or salinity changes at a given location.
Ref: Oceans, Elder and Pernetta, p. 27. - Oceanography, Gross, p. 205.

2-Challenge to Produce Like the Holy Qur'an

Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{{And if you (Arab pagans, Jews, and Christians) are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (i.e. the Qur'an) to Our slave (Muhammad Peace be upon him), then produce a *Surah* (chapter) of the like thereof and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides Allâh, if you are truthful. But if you do it not, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.}} (Holly Qur'an 2: 23-24)

Ever since the Qur'an was revealed, fourteen centuries ago, no one has been able to produce a single chapter like the chapters of the Qur'an in their beauty, eloquence, splendor, wise legislation, true information, true prophecy, and other perfect attributes. Also, note that the smallest chapter in the Qur'an (Chapter 108) is only ten words, yet no one has ever been able to meet this challenge, then or today. Some of the disbelieving Arabs who were enemies of the Prophet Muhammad-peace be upon him- tried to meet this challenge to prove that Muhammad -peace be upon him- was not a true prophet, but they failed to do so. This failure was despite the fact that the Holy Qur'an was revealed in their own language and dialect and that the Arabs at

the time of Muhammad -peace be upon him- were very eloquent people who used to compose beautiful and excellent poetry, still read and appreciated today.

3-Islam is Foretold in the Holy Book:

In Deuteronomy 18, Prophet Moses stated that God told him: "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account." (Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

From these verses we conclude that the prophet in this prophecy must have the following three characteristics:

1) That he will be like Moses.

2) That he will come from the brothers of the Israelites, i.e. the Ishmaelites.

3) That God will put His words in to the mouth of this prophet and that he will declare what God commands him.

Let us examine these three characteristics in more depth:

a) A prophet like Moses:

There were hardly any two prophets who were so much alike as Moses and Muhammad. Both were given a comprehensive law and code of life. They both had encountered their enemies and were victorious in miraculous ways. They both were accepted as prophets and statesmen. They both migrated following conspiracies to assassinate them. Analogies between Moses and Jesus overlook not only the above similarities but other crucial ones as well. These include the natural birth, the family life, and the death of Moses and Muhammad. All these facts differentiate Moses from Jesus, peace be upon them. Moreover Jesus was regarded by his followers as the Son of God and not exclusively as a prophet of God, as Moses and Muhammad were and as Muslims believe Jesus was. So, this prophecy refers to the Prophet Muhammad- peace be upon him- and not to Jesus, because Muhammad is more similar to Moses than Jesus.

Also, one notices from the Gospel of John that the Jews were waiting for the fulfillment of three distinct prophecies. The first was the coming of Christ. The second was the coming of Elijah. The third was the coming of the Prophet. This is obvious from the three questions that were posed to John the Baptist:

"Now this was John's testimony, when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he

was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ." They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." (John 1:19-21).
If we look in a Bible with cross-references, we will find in the marginal notes where the word "the Prophet" occurs in John 1:21 is the same one that refers to the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18:18.2. Accordingly, we conclude from this gauging that Jesus Christ is not the prophet mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:18.

b) From the brothers of the Israelites:

Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac (Genesis 21). Ishmael became the grandfather of the Arab nation, and Isaac became the grandfather of the Jewish nation. The prophet spoken of was not to come from among the Jews themselves, but from among their brothers, i.e. the Ishmaelites. Muhammad, a descendant of Ishmael, is indeed this prophet.

Also, Isaiah 42:1-13 speaks of the servant of God, His "chosen one" and "messenger" who will bring down a law. "He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope." (Isaiah 42:4). Verse 11, connects that awaited one with the descendants of Kedar. Who is Kedar? According to Genesis 25:13, Kedar was the

second son of Ishmael, the ancestor of the Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him}.

c) God will put His words in the mouth of this prophet:

The words of God (the Holy Qur'an) were truly put into Muhammad's mouth. Allah Almighty sent the Angel Gabriel to teach Muhammad the exact words of God (the Holy Qur'an) and asked him to dictate them to the people as he heard them. The words are therefore not his own. They did not come from his own thoughts, but were put into his mouth by the Angel Gabriel. During the life time of Muhammad-peace be upon him-and under his supervision, these words were then memorized and written by his companions.

Also, this prophecy in Deuteronomy mentioned that this prophet will speak the words of God in the name of God. If we looked to the Holy Qur'an, we will find that all its chapters, except Chapter 9, are preceded or begin with the phrase, "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."

Another indication (other than the prophecy in Deuteronomy) is that Isaiah ties the messenger connected with Kedar with a new song (a scripture in a new language) to be sung to the Lord (Isaiah 42:10-11).

This is mentioned more clearly in the prophecy of Isaiah: “and another tongue, he will speak to this people” (Isaiah 28:11 KJV). Another related point focuses on the revelation of the Holy Qur'an in sections over a span of twenty-three years. It is interesting to compare this with Isaiah 28 which speaks of the same thing, “For it is: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there.” (Isaiah 28:10)

Chapter Five

Top misconceptions about Islam

1. Muslims are violent, terrorists

This is the biggest misconception in Islam. It is no doubt resulting from the constant stereotyping and bashing the misshapen features of Muslims through the use of the media. When a gunman attacks a mosque in the name of Judaism, a Catholic IRA guerrilla sets off a bomb in an urban area, or Serbian Orthodox militiamen rape and kill innocent Muslim civilians, these acts are not used to stereotype an entire faith. Never are these acts attributed to the religion of the perpetrators. Yet how many times have we heard the words 'Islamic, Muslim fundamentalist, etc.' linked with violence.

Politics in so called "Muslim countries" may or may not have any Islamic basis. Often dictators and politicians will use the name of Islam for their own purposes. One should remember to go to the source of Islam and separate what the true religion of Islam says from what is portrayed in the media. Islam literally means 'submission to God' and is derived from a root word that substantially means 'peace'.

Islam may seem exotic or even extreme in the modern world. Perhaps this is because religion doesn't dominate everyday life in the West, whereas Islam is considered a 'way of life' for Muslims and they make no division between secular and sacred in their lives. Like Christianity, Islam permits fighting in self-defense, in defense of religion, or on the part of those who have been expelled forcibly from their homes. It lays down strict rules of combat which include prohibitions against harming civilians and destroying crops, trees and livestock.

NOWHERE DOES ISLAM ENJOIN THE KILLING OF INNOCENTS....The Holy Qur'an says:

{{And fight in the Way of Allâh those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allâh likes not the transgressors.}} (Holly Qur’an 2:190)

{{But if they incline to peace, you also incline to it, and (put your) trust in Allâh. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower}} (Holly Qur’an 8: 61)

War, therefore, is the last resort, and is subject to the rigorous conditions laid down by the sacred law. The term 'jihad' literally means 'struggle'. Muslims believe that there are two kinds of jihad. The other 'jihad' is the inner struggle of the soul which everyone wages against egotistic desires for the sake of attaining

inner peace, happy life in the mundane world and in the Hereafter.

2: Islam oppresses women:

The images of the typical Muslim woman include wearing the veil, being forced to stay home, and are forbidden to drive vehicles are all common in most of peoples' thoughts. Although some Muslim countries may have laws that oppress women, this should not be considered as coming from Islam. Many of these countries do not rule by any kind of Shari'ah (Islamic law), but rather they introduce their own cultural standpoints on the issue of gender equity.

Islam on the other hand gives men and women different roles and equity between the two is laid down in the Holy Qur'an and the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Islam sees a woman, whether single or married, as a respectful individual in the society who has rights to own and dispose of her property and earnings. A marriage gift is given by the groom to the bride for her own personal use, and she keeps her own family name rather than taking her husband's name. Both men and women are expected to dress in a way that is modest and dignified.

The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: "The most perfect in faith amongst believers is he who is best in manner and kindest to his wife."

Violence of any kind towards women and forcing them against their will for anything is not allowed in Islam. A Muslim marriage is a simple, legal agreement in which either partner is free to include conditions.

Marital customs thus vary widely from country to country. Divorce is not common, although it is acceptable as a last resort. According to Islam, a Muslim girl cannot be forced to marry against her will: her parents simply suggest young men they think may be suitable to her. This is the freedom of Islam that gives it to woman while she has no right to do anything in the darkness age of Europe.

3: Muslims worship a different God:

Allah is simply the Arabic word for God. Allah is for Muslims the greatest and most inclusive of the Names of God. It is an Arabic word that contains a rich meaning, denoting the one and only God and ascribing no partners to Him. It is exactly the same word which the Jews, in Hebrew, use for God (Elohe), the word which Jesus Christ used in Aramaic when he prayed to God. God has an identical name in Judaism,

Christianity, and Islam; Allah is the same God worshipped by Muslims, Christians and Jews. Muslims believe that Allah's sovereignty is to be acknowledged in worship and in the pledge to obey His teaching and commandments, conveyed through His messengers and prophets who were sent at various times and in many places throughout history. However, it should be noted that God in Islam is One and Only. He, the Exalted, does not get tired, does not have a son (i.e. Jesus) or have associates, nor does He have human-like attributions as found in the other faiths which are thought to be changed through the run of history.

4: Islam was spread by the sword and is intolerant of other faiths:

Many social studies textbooks for students show the image of an Arab horseman carrying a sword in one hand and the Holy Qur'an in the other conquering and forcibly converting. This, though, is not a correct Portrayal of history. Islam has always given respect and freedom of religion to all faiths. The Holy Qur'an says:

{{Allâh does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allâh loves those who deal with equity}} (Holly Qur’an 60:8)

Freedom of religion is laid down in the Holy Qur'an itself:

{{There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in *Tâghût* and believes in Allâh, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allâh is All-Hearer, All-Knower.}} (Holly Qur'an 2: 256)

Christian missionary, T.W. Arnold had this opinion on his study of the question of Islam's spread: "...of any organized attempt to force the acceptance of Islam on the non-Muslim population, or of any systematic persecution intended to stamp out the Christian religion, we hear nothing. Had the caliphs chosen to adopt either course of action, they might have swept away Christianity as easily as Ferdinand and Isabella drove Islam out of Spain, or Louis XIV made Protestantism..."

It is a function of Islamic law to protect the privileged status of minorities, and this is why non-Muslim places of worship have flourished all over the Islamic world. History provides many examples of Muslim tolerance towards other faiths: when the caliph Omar entered Jerusalem in the year 634, Islam granted freedom of worship to all religious communities in the city. Proclaiming to the inhabitants that their lives, and property were safe, and that their places of worship

would never be taken from them, he asked the Christian patriarch Sophronius to accompany him on a visit to all the holy places. The Christians of Jerusalem are keeping till today the covenant of Omar, the second Caliph in Islam. Islamic law also permits non-Muslim minorities to set up their own courts, which implement family laws drawn up by the minorities themselves. The life and property of all citizens in an Islamic state are considered sacred whether the person is Muslim or not.

One has to tell that there was a Muslim soldier who has trespassed the rights of a Jewish man in Iraq after defeating the Persian Empire. This Muslim soldier had pillaged the house of the Jewish man who himself went to the Madinah to complain about this misdemeanor. As soon as the Caliph Omar heard about this plunder, he sued this soldier not only to give back the house to the Jewish man, but also to be punished for his bad deed that has not a jot of relationship with Islam.

Racism is not a part of Islam, the Holy Qur'an speaks only of human equality and how all peoples are equal in the sight of God.

{{O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allâh is that (believer) who has

At-Taqwa [i.e. one of the *Muttaqûn* (pious)]. Verily, Allâh is All-Knowing, All-Aware.}}
(Holly Qur'an 49:13)

This Holy verse was not only a statement in the Holy Qur'an, but also a real fact in the Muslim world especially at the time that Muslims were used to follow the Holy orders word by word to the point they got a great empire in 25 years at the time that the Romans have spent 700 years to settle their great empire. For instance, Amr Ibn AlAs, one of Muslim leaders who used to be monitoring Egypt under the agreement of the Caliph Omar, had a son who vied with an Egyptian guy.

Thereafter, when the son lost the race competition, he has beaten up the Egyptian guy while uttering: do you overcome me and I am the son of the nobles! The Egyptian young man was deeply hurt, and he went to the Madinah to complain against the son of this leader. The Caliph Omar arraigned Amr Ibn AlAs and his son to his court; then, he said to the Egyptian young man:

"I want you to beat up the son of the nobles and the noble man (who is the governor of Egypt-Amr Ibn AlAs!". The Egyptian man said: O Caliph of the faithful, I just want to beat up the son of our governor for he had hurt me!"

Pausing here for a moment, the Caliph Omar, may Allah be praised with him, turned to the governor of Egypt and said a historical sentence, "O Amr! Since when did you enslave the people whom their mothers had brought to the world free!"

On the heat of the moment, I should mention a discussion has been with one of my best American friends. She asked about the truth of the fact that Islam had been widespread by the power of the swords. I told her,' Look Nancy, Islam was just the Saudi Arabia, then it has been spread almost everywhere…many Muslim scholars who have protected Islam are not Arabs, but they are from Russia, Perse, and other places; for example, Imam Al Bukhari and Imam Muslim.

Nowadays the Arabs are very weak, but look around you: Turkey that used to be the second Christian place (Constantinople) after Rome is still Islamic many years after the weakness of the Arab Muslims…It is the same thing for Malaysia, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Kosovo, the Middle East, Egypt etc…What is the reason that let them keep their religion even though they many times suffer because of adopting a religious life and loving Allah Almighty…there is no mundane power that compels them to convert to Islam…They are Muslims because they want to seek the path of comfort, soulful content, and perennial happy life. They are still

Muslims because they found themselves within the glistening of the Holy Words that come directly from the Lord of the World.

5: All Muslims are Arabs:

The Muslim population of the world is around 1, 2 billion. One out of five people in the world is a Muslim. They are a vast range of races, nationalities, and cultures from around the globe--from the Philippines to Nigeria--they are united by their common Islamic faith. Only about 18% live in the Arab world and the largest Muslim community is in Indonesia. Most Muslims live east of Pakistan. Thirty percent of Muslims live in the Indian subcontinent, 20% in Sub-Saharan Africa, 17% in Southeast Asia, 18% in the Arab world, and 10% in the Soviet Union and China. Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan make up 10% of the non-Arab Middle East. Although there are Muslim minorities in almost every area, including Latin America and Australia, they are most numerous in Russia and its newly independent states, India and central Africa. There are about 6 million Muslims in the United States.

6: All Muslim men marry four wives:

The religion of Islam was revealed for all societies and all times, and as it is, it accommodates widely differing social requirements. Circumstances may warrant the taking of another wife but the right is granted, according to the Holy Qur'an, only on condition that the husband is scrupulously fair. No woman can be forced into this kind of marriage if they do not wish it, and they also have the right to exclude it in their marriage contract.

Polygamy is neither mandatory, nor encouraged, but merely permitted. Images of "sheikhs with harems" are not consistent with Islam, as a man is only allowed at most four wives only if he can fulfill the stringent conditions of treating each fairly and providing each with separate housing etc. Permission to practice polygamy is not associated with mere satisfaction of passion. It is rather associated with compassion toward widows and orphans. It was the Holy Qur'an that limited and put conditions on the practice of polygamy among the Arabs, who had as many as ten or more wives and considered, them "property".

It is both honest and accurate to say that it is Islam that regulated this practice, limited it, made it more humane, and instituted equal rights and status for

all wives. What the Qur'anic decrees amount to, taken together is discouragement of polygamy unless necessity for it exists. It is also evident that the general rule in Islam is monogamy and not polygamy. It is a very tiny percentage of Muslims that practice it over the world. However, permission to practice limited polygamy is only consistent with Islam's realistic view of the nature of man and woman and of various social needs, problems and cultural variations.

The question is, however far more than the inherent flexibility of Islam; it also is the frank and straightforward approach of Islam in dealing with practical problems. Rather than requiring hypocritical and superficial compliance, Islam delves deeper into the problems of individuals and societies, and provides for legitimate and clean solutions which are far more beneficial than would be the case if they were ignored. There is no doubt that the second wife legally married and treated kindly is better off than a mistress without any legal rights or permanence. It is quite true that man in the United States of America and Europe gets married to a one woman, but alas, the percentage of the betrayal of the husbands trespasses the number of four that is legally accepted in Islam. A Western man marries only one woman, but meanwhile, he can have an abundant number of illegal relationships with other women! Islam restricted this chaos by imposing the rules of polygamy with quite certain rules that keep the

honour of the woman as a respectful human being and not a mere device for pleasure.

7: Muslims are barbaric and backward people:

Among the reasons for the rapid and peaceful spread of Islam was the simplicity of its doctrine. Islam calls for faith in only one God Who is worthy to worship. It also repeatedly instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation. Within few years, great civilizations and universities were flourishing, for according to the Prophet peace be upon him, 'seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman'.

The synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas that have correlated the new thought to the old one, have engendered because of the Muslims' efforts great advances in medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography, architecture, art, literature, and history. Many crucial systems such as algebra, the Arabic numerals, and also the concept of the zero (vital to the advancement of mathematics), were transmitted to medieval Europe from Islam. Sophisticated instruments which were to make possible the European voyages of discovery were developed, including the astrolabe, the quadrant and good navigational maps.

8: Muhammad was the founder of Islam and Muslims worship him:

Muhammad peace be upon him was born in Mecca in the year 570. Since his father died before his birth, and his mother shortly afterwards, he was raised by his uncle from the respected tribe of Quraysh. As he grew up, he became known for his truthfulness, generosity and sincerity, so that he was sought after for his ability to arbitrate in disputes. The historians describe him as calm and meditative. Muhammad peace be upon him was of a deeply religious nature, and had long detested the decadence of his society.

It became his habit to meditate from time to time in the Cave of Hira near Mecca. At the age of 40, while engaged in a meditative retreat, Muhammad -peace be upon him- received his first revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel. This revelation, which continued for 23 years, is known as the Holy Qur'an. As soon as he began to recite the words he heard from Gabriel, and to preach the truth which God had revealed to him, he and his small group of followers suffered bitter persecution, which grew fiercely. In the year 622 God gave them the command to emigrate.

This event, the Hijrah or 'migration', in which they left Mecca for the city of Medina, marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. After several years,

the Prophet and his followers were able to return to Mecca, where they forgave their enemies and established Islam definitively to spread out in the other regions smoothly and effectively. Before the death of the Prophet - peace be upon him- at the age of 63, the greater part of Arabia was Muslim, and within a century of his death Islam had spread to Spain in the West and as far East as China. He died with less than five possessions to his name.

While Muhammad -peace be upon him- was chosen to deliver the message, he is not considered the founder" of Islam, since Muslims consider Islam to be the same Divine guidance sent to all peoples before. Muslims believe in all the prophets from Adam, Noah, Moses, Jesus etc. who were all sent with divine guidance for their peoples. Every prophet was sent to his own people, but Muhammad peace be upon him was sent to all of mankind for he is considered to be the last messenger. It is substantial to think of the messenger Muhammad as the last and final messenger who is sent to deliver the message of Islam. Muslims revere and honour him- peace be upon him- for all he went through and his dedication, but they absolutely do not worship him.

{{O Prophet (Muhammad)! Verily, We have sent you as witness, and a bearer of glad tidings, and a Warner, And as one who invites to Allâh [Islâmic Monotheism, i.e. to worship none but Allâh (Alone)] by

His Leave, and as a lamp spreading light (through your instructions from the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah the legal ways of the Prophet*). }}, (Holly Qur'an 33: 45-46).

9: Muslims don't believe in Jesus or any other prophets:

Muslims respect and revere Jesus, peace be upon him, and await his Second Coming. They consider him one of the greatest God's messengers to mankind. A Muslim never refers to him simply as 'Jesus', but always adds the phrase "peace be upon him ". The Holy Qur'an confirms his virgin birth (a chapter of the Holy Qur'an is entitled 'Mary'), and Mary is considered the purest woman among all the creation. The Holy Qur'an describes the Annunciation as follows:

{{And (remember) when the angels said: "O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allâh has chosen you, purified you (from polytheism and disbelief), and chosen you above the women of the '*Alamîn* (mankind and jinns) (of her lifetime)." O Mary! "Submit yourself with obedience to your Lord (Allâh, by worshipping none but Him Alone) and prostrate yourself, and *Irkâ'i* (bow down etc.) along with *Ar-Râki'ûn* (those who bow down etc.).", This is a part of the news of the *Ghaib* (unseen, i.e. the news of the past nations of which you have no knowledge) which We inspire you with (O

Muhammad). You were not with them, when they cast lots with their pens as to which of them should be charged with the care of Maryam (Mary); nor were you with them when they disputed. (Remember) when the angels said: "O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allâh gives you the glad tidings of a Word ["Be!" - and he was! i.e. 'Isa (Jesus) the son of Maryam (Mary)] from Him, his name will be the Messiah 'Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), held in honour in this world and in the Hereafter, and will be one of those who are near to Allâh.", "He will speak to the people in the cradle and in manhood, and he will be one of the righteous.", She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me." He said: "So (it will be) for Allâh creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He says to it only: "Be!" and it is. And He (Allâh) will teach him ['Isa (Jesus)] the Book and *Al-Hikmah* (i.e. the *Sunnah*, the faultless speech of the Prophets, wisdom, etc.), (and) the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel).}} (Holly Qur'an 3: 42-48)

"Jesus "peace be upon him" was born miraculously through the same power, which had brought Adam "peace be upon him "into being without a father:

{{Verily, the likeness of 'Isa (Jesus) before Allâh is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: "Be!" - and he was}}
(Holly Qur'an 3: 59)

During his prophetic mission Jesus "peace be upon him" performed many miracles. The Qur'an tells us that he said:

{{And will make him ['Isa (Jesus)] a Messenger to the Children of Israel (saying): "I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I design for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's Leave; and I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by Allah's Leave. And I inform you of what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely, therein is a sign for you, if you believe.}} (Holly Qur'an 3: 49)

Neither Muhammad- peace be upon him- nor Jesus "peace be upon them came to change the basic doctrine of the belief in One God brought by earlier prophets, but to confirm and renew it.

In the Holy Qur'an Jesus "peace be upon him" is reported as saying:

{{And I have come confirming that which was before me of the Taurât (Torah), and to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you, and I have come to you with a proof from your Lord. So fear Allâh and obey me. , Truly! Allâh is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him (Alone). This is the Straight Path.}} (Holly Qur'an 3: 50-51)

This is similar to what we find in the Bible when Jesus "peace be upon him" said in the Book of Matthews: "5:17 Think not that I am coming to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not coming to destroy, but to fulfill".

Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him said:

"Whoever believes there is no god but Allah, alone without a partner, that Muhammad is His messenger, that Jesus is the servant and messenger of God, His word that breathed into Mary and a spirit emanating from Him, and that Paradise and Hell are true, shall be received by God into Heaven."

Chapter Six

Faculties Of Islam

Islam takes care of the human being from several dimensions in order to make the man/women well-developed in a stabilized society where mirth, cooperation, and peace in inmost feelings and the reality of the person. There are many useful faculties on which Islam lean to go further in the human transactions and the mutual relationships that are assumed to be substantially successful. In the following lines, there are going to be mentioned some of the Islamic faculties that pay attention to the human deeds in Islam.

1. The orphans:

Allah Almighty urges the prophet Muhammad peace be upon him to take care of the orphan:

{{Therefore, treat not the orphan with oppression,}} (Holly Qur'an 93:9)

It is not only ordained to take care of the orphan but also to treat him/her kindly and affectionately. This attitude is very lucrative before Allah Almighty for the person will gain the mercy and the reward from the

Lord of the world. This is considered as the path of the righteousness in the Holy Qur'an,

{{It is not *Al-Birr* (piety, righteousness, and each and every act of obedience to Allâh, etc.) that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but *Al-Birr* is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allâh, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to *Al-Masâkin* (the poor), and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, performs *As-Salât* (*Iqâmat-as-Salât*), and gives the *Zakât*, and who fulfill their covenant when they make it, and who are *As-Sâbirin* (the patient ones, etc.) in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles). Such are the people of the truth and they are *Al-Muttaqûn* (pious)}}
(Holly Qur'an 2:177)

2. Science:

Islam is known as the religion of the science for there are no conflicts between the science and the religion. This means that Islam does not prohibit the path of knowledge and science, but it rather imposes on Muslims to seek the Lore so as to be in high levels in the paradise.

{{ .. Say: "Are those who know equal to those who know not?" It is only men of understanding who will remember}} (Holly Qur'an 39: 9)

Furthermore, the scholars are the best people to know the greatness and glory of Allah Almighty to the extent to fear Him. This is utterly furthered in the Holy Qur'an,

{{It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allâh. Verily, Allâh is AllMighty, Oft Forgiving. }} (Holly Qur'an 35:28)

To boot, one has to add that the messenger of Allah Muhammad peace be upon him used to urge the Muslims to seek the path of knowledge. He used to say:

"Whoever has sought the path to knowledge, Allah Almighty will pave the path to him to get to paradise." (Abu Dawood 3645)

The necessity of science in Islam is based on knowing the ultimate truth about the world to decipher the codes of oneself, the surroundings, the others, and the universe. This substantial truth will enable the person to know one's creator so as to praise His Almighty and to pray to Him as He only wants us to do.

3. The environment:

If one takes golden shots of the Islamic practice towards the environment, one can discern the huge care of Muslims towards the environment.

The Prophet, upon him be blessings and peace, declared:

- "If any Muslim plants a tree or sows a field, and a human, bird or animal eats from it, it shall be reckoned as charity from him." (Bukhari 2320)

- "If the day of resurrection comes upon anyone of you while he has a seedling in hand, let him plant it." (Ahmed 13240)

- "Faith (believing) is more than seventy ways , highest is the testimony of (No God But Allah), and the lowest is to remove any harm (dirt, rock, … etc.) from road." (Muslim: 162)

- "Removing Harms from roads is a charity."
(Bukhari; 24)

«No harm and no inflicting harm» (Ibn Magah 2430), Means you shouldn't make nothing Harm to others or to your self (smoking, noise …etc.)

This positive attitude involves taking measures to improve all aspects of life: health, nutrition, and the psychological and spiritual dimensions, for man's benefit and the maintenance of his welfare, as well as for the betterment of life for all future generations.

And as is shown in the Prophetic declarations above, the aim of both the conservation and development of the environment in Islam is the universal good of all created beings.

4. Racism:

There is no difference between people in Islam for the human beings are all equal and the favorites to Allah Almighty are the most pious ones. This is clearly expounded in Islam to demarcate the relationships between the people and to define the status of nobility that is correlated to only piety instead of the race, color, and wealth.

{{O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allâh is that (believer) who has *At-Taqwa* [i.e. one of the *Muttaqûn* (pious)]. Verily, Allâh is All-Knowing, All-Aware.}}
(Holly Qur’an 49:13)

The practice of equity in Islam is quite clear during the pilgrimage in Mecca,

"(The Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca) was an exhilarating experience to see people belonging to different colours, races and nationalities, kings, heads of states and ordinary men from very poor countries all clad in two simple white sheets praying to God without any sense of either pride or inferiority. It was a practical manifestation of the concept of equally in Islam." Cassius Clay, now Muhammad Ali.

It goes without saying that there is no problem in Islam about the white and Black people. The Muslims do not treat people well or badly because of their colors for they are all created by one God: Allah Almighty.

5. The Rights of Animals:

Allah Almighty has made important value to the animals as they are created by Him. One has to be nice towards the animals and to treat them as good as one can do for they are creatures like us: they feel, smell, sleep, work, cooperate etc.

The prophet Mohammad peace be upon him has stated,

"Allah has ordained beneficence in everything. Thus, if you kill do it well; and if you slaughter, perform well. You have to sharpen your lame so as to soothe the slain animal." (Muslim. 5167)

From this perspective, one has to know that it is forbidden to kill animals in Islam unless one slaughters them in order to eat them like cows, fish, chicken etc.

It is also ordered not to torture the animals in any case. These animals are to be respected as creatures of Allah Almighty. It is narrated that Ibn Omar has passed by young guys who were playing with a little bird by the use of their arrows. The guys escaped when they had seen him. He looked upon this poor bird and said, " The animals must be treated well for the Muslim must be in tandem with nature that is surrounding him for his/her own benefits and the other creatures' benefits.

Also, let's remember the Hadith of Muhammad (peace be upon him) - "If any Muslim plants a tree or sows a field and a human, bird or animal eats from it, it shall be reckoned as charity from him." (Bukhari; 2320)

The messenger of Allah Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to say," Who has hurt this bird? Woe be to the one who has done this torment to it! The messenger of Allah, Muhammad (peace be upon him) has cursed whoever dares to play or hurt anything that

has a soul – like an animal- " it is narrated by the two Sheikhs: Al Bukhari and Muslim. The messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) had also stated, "Don't cause damage or detriment". That is to say the bullfighting and the cockfighting are extremely forbidden in Islam for they cause a great damage for animals. All of this hurt is done for the sake of the unmerciful people. Though, this saying means one is not to hurt oneself or the others for every creature in the world has his/her/its own rights to be protected for the sake of the Lord of the world.

6. The Rights of the prisoners:

Allah Almighty has forbidden the Muslims to harm the human beings who are prisoners of war. The case that they are prisoners does not deny their human rights for they need to be considered carefully with all the respect a person deserve in a humane attitude. For instance, torture is very prohibited Islam. The messenger of Allah Muhammad peace be upon him stated, “Do not mutilate.” (Narrated by Muslim 3/1357) This is assumed to be practiced in Islam among Muslims.

Furthermore, Islam urges the person to treat well the prisoners and even to release them for their rights to be simply free as respectful human beings.

The messenger of Allah Muhammad peace be upon him had insisted in the Hadith of Sahih, "You have to nourish the hungry person, visit the sick person, and release the prisoner", it is narrated by (Al Bukhari)

This attitude in Islam is considered as one of the acts of respect and cooperation among the human beings in the Muslim society. The Muslim are to be united as one body; and in case a part of the body, regardless of its smallness, is suffering, the whole will automatically stay up and has a fever all the time till this part of body will be recovered and fine.

The parents:

The parents are to be seriously cared of for the sake of Allah Almighty Who has ordained people to do as follows:

{{Worship Allâh and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, *Al-Masâkin* (the poor), the neighbour who is near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allâh does not like such as are proud and boastful.}}
(Holly Qur'an 4:36)

Allah Almighty has enjoined His worshipping to the good deed towards the parents for they are the ones who has raised the child up and educated him/her to be in the position that he/she is in there.

{{And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour., And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small."}} (Holly Qur'an 17: 23-24)

One of the men had asked the messenger of Allah Muhammad peace be upon him about whom the most important in the view of Allah to care about. The messenger of Allah had answered, "Your mother". He has said it thrice, and in the fourth time the man had asked him again, he answered, "your father". This statement gives the evidence to people to take care of their parents, especially the mother who has been pregnant for nine months to bring the person to life. The mother has suffered a lot to bring up the child, and then, it is extremely necessary to treat her well and to be nice towards her as a valuable gem in the heart of the person who embodies one's thoughts and reverent feelings in good acts and sincere gratitude. In a word,

Islam cares about the nub of the society that is called the family.

Conclusion

Coming to the end of this book, one has to point out that the seeker of the right path has to be look forward to rummaging the correct source with the right people to know the total truth. This seems to be quite hard in the middle of the chaos of the media and the misshapen features of Islam because the misdeeds of some Muslims. Definitely, one has to ask Allah Almighty to show him/her the absolute truth and the ultimate facts of the world to know what to choose and to be quite certain of the right thing to do towards Him Almighty, towards oneself and others. These are some useful links to look upon with all of our devout wishes.

www.sultan.org
www.islam-guide.com
www.islamhouse.com
www.beconvinced.com

Contents

Note: Quran Versions used were: The Noble Quran, An English translation of the meanings of The Holy Quran. Translators: Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Aɫ Hilali, Ph.D. Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. And also, Translation Of The Meanings Of The Glorious Quran, Translated By AbulQasim Publishing House, 1997 (Aɫ Muntada Alislami)

All praise to Allah.

والحمد لله رب العالمين.